

Anacostia Waterfront Area Element

OVERVIEW ¹⁵⁰⁰

The Anacostia Waterfront Planning Area encompasses 8.7 square miles of land located along both sides of the Anacostia River in the northeast, southwest, and southeast quadrants of the District of Columbia. Its boundaries are shown in the Map to the left. This Planning Area includes lands that have historically been parts of Council Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8. In the past, portions have also been in Ward 2. ^{1500.1}

The Anacostia waterfront is Washington's great frontier for the 21st century. Much of its shoreline is on the cusp of being transformed from a landscape of industrial, transportation, and government uses to one of new mixed use neighborhoods, workplaces, civic spaces, parks, and restored natural areas. Established waterfront neighborhoods stand to benefit greatly as this transformation occurs, with improved access to the shoreline, new recreational amenities, new housing and transportation choices, and a cleaner natural environment. ^{1500.2}

Land uses along the Anacostia waterfront are diverse. The shoreline currently includes wetlands and large open spaces, marinas, power plants, housing, commercial centers, and industry. The Anacostia Waterfront Planning Area includes the residential neighborhoods of Southwest, River Terrace, Mayfair, Eastland Gardens, and Kenilworth-Parkside. Its parks and open spaces include the National Arboretum, Langston Golf Course, Kingman Island, Heritage Island, Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, RFK Stadium, and Anacostia Park. The area also includes federal military installations such as Fort McNair and the Washington Navy Yard, and local public facilities such as the DC Jail and former DC General Hospital. ^{1500.3}

While all of the areas listed above are located within one-half mile of the Anacostia River, only a few are commonly thought of as waterfront areas. Most of the waterfront parks are separated from the neighborhoods they adjoin by barriers like freeways and railroads. Power plants, military installations, and industrial uses also limit access. ^{1500.4}

The River itself has suffered from neglect. The Anacostia has long been Washington's "second river" lagging far behind the Potomac in visibility, image, public investment, and environmental clean-up. Runoff from the 176-square mile Anacostia River watershed, most of which is in Maryland, has polluted surface waters and compromised wetlands. This in turn affects water quality in the Lower Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. ^{1500.5}



DISTRICT ELEMENTS



View down river, Pennsylvania Avenue (Sousa Bridge) in foreground

Conditions along the river will change dramatically as the Anacostia Framework Plan is implemented. The Framework Plan, which was adopted by the DC Council in 2004 as part of the legislation creating the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation, lays out a strategy for improving water quality, restoring habitat, and improving shoreline parks so that the waterfront becomes the centerpiece for new and revitalized communities. A network of trails, paths, and reconstructed bridges will help mend the divide that the river has come to symbolize in Washington. The objective is not only to connect the east and west shorelines, but to connect the city itself through great parks, public places, and new neighborhoods along a restored river.

1500.6

The Anacostia Waterfront Corporation (AWC) is leading the revitalization of lands along the river and coordinating environmental and programming initiatives that promote river clean up, public awareness, and waterfront recreation.

1500.7

The waterfront area is already experiencing substantial change. Since 2000, millions of square feet of office space have been constructed in the Near Southeast and hundreds of new residential units have been built. Former public housing at Arthur Capper-Carrollsborg is being replaced by new mixed income housing, with one-for-one replacement of every public housing unit removed. Redevelopment has been accompanied by vast improvements in housing quality, public safety, and project design. Groundbreaking for the new Washington National's baseball stadium took place in early 2006. Projects on surrounding sites will transform this area into a new destination for visitors and residents from all parts of the region, nation, and world.

1500.8

Other planned improvements include a 70-acre public park at Poplar Point, an Interpretive Nature Center at a newly accessible Kingman Island, the Washington Canal Blocks Park in Near Southeast, and mixed use development in the Parkside, Southwest Waterfront, Southeast Federal Center, Poplar Point, and Hill East neighborhoods. Throughout the Planning Area, neighborhoods will be better connected to the river by extending streets to the waterfront, adding waterfront promenades, and providing new forms of transportation such as water taxis. Rebuilding of the South Capitol Street/Frederick Douglass Bridge and the 11th / 12th Street bridges will change the visual profile of the waterfront and make pedestrian and bicycle crossings safer and easier.

1500.9



By the time of the Civil War, tobacco farming, clear-cutting of forests, and industrial activities had silted and polluted the Anacostia. The river shrank from depths of 40 feet to barely eight feet, making it too shallow for navigation by sea-bound vessels. The Navy Yard built its last large ship in 1876.

Context

History ¹⁵⁰¹

The Anacostia watershed contains lush habitat and diverse ecosystems, which in pre-colonial times supported the Nacotchtank Indians. Four hundred years ago, a Nacotchtank village is believed to have existed on the east bank of the Anacostia River near what is now Benning Road. In the early years of European settlement, the river was known as the “Eastern Branch” of the Potomac. It formed the edge of the federal city, and was the terminus of important radial avenues extending out from the U.S. Capitol in the 1791 L’Enfant Plan. ^{1501.1}

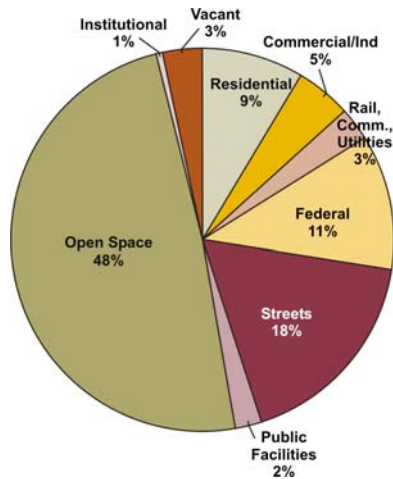
In 1799, the Washington Navy Yard was established about a mile south of the U.S. Capitol. It became the main port for receiving materials to construct the new city’s monumental buildings. Wharves and fisheries were established along the shoreline, and ocean-going vessels enjoyed a navigable channel up to the port of Bladensburg, Maryland. By the mid-1800s, development around the Navy Yard extended across the river via the 11st Street Bridge to Historic Anacostia (then called Uniontown). Working class housing for Navy workers and others employed at the docks and nearby industrial areas was developed. ^{1501.2}

By the time of the Civil War, tobacco farming, clear-cutting of forests, and industrial activities had silted and polluted the Anacostia. The river shrank from depths of 40 feet to barely eight feet, making it too shallow for navigation by sea-bound vessels. The Navy Yard built its last large ship in 1876. After the War, the large tobacco plantations that had dominated the landscape along the Anacostia River were broken up into smaller farms or abandoned. The blue collar settlements around the Navy Yard included a large population of freed slaves, beginning a long history of African-American neighborhoods along the river. ^{1501.3}

With the construction of Washington’s sewer system in the 1880s, water quality in the Anacostia River continued to deteriorate. The tidal wetlands were the source of mosquito-borne malaria outbreaks and were prone to periodic flooding. In 1901, the Senate Parks Commission suggested (through the McMillan Plan) that riverfront open space be constructed as means of improving public health conditions and creating parkland. Between 1902 and 1926, the US Army Corps of Engineers filled in wetlands and mud flats, and constructed seawalls along the riverbanks in order to create Anacostia Park. Tons of dredged river bottom were used to create Kingman and Heritage Islands. However, the McMillan Plan vision of a grand interconnected public park system was never realized. ^{1501.4}



Figure 15.1:
Land Use Composition in the
Anacostia Waterfront Area
1502.3



For most of the 20th century, the Anacostia waterfront continued to be the location for unwanted land uses and neglectful land management practices. Landfilling of the marshes and wetlands continued through the 1930s and 1940s. Most of the tributaries were re-routed into storm drains, further compromising the ecosystem and health of the river. 1501.5

After World War II, significant population growth in the watershed affected both the river and the waterfront neighborhoods. While direct dumping into the river was curbed, highway building and development in the 176-square mile watershed led to continued pollution from stormwater runoff. Neighborhoods near the Southwest waterfront deteriorated further and finally were declared “obsolete” by planning documents of the early 1950s. Plans to rehabilitate the housing in an incremental manner were passed over in favor of more dramatic plans to clear and rebuild the entire community. These plans ultimately resulted in the largest urban renewal project in the United States. Thousands of mostly poor, African-American families were displaced and connections to the waterfront were further eroded by the new Southeast/Southwest Freeway. 1501.6

By the 1970s, a grass roots movement to save the Anacostia River was gaining momentum. This movement grew during the 1980s and 1990s, as groups like the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Anacostia Watershed Society advocated for the restoration of the city’s “forgotten” river and improvements to its watershed to reduce pollution. Initiatives and mandates to clean the Chesapeake Bay and implement federal water quality programs provided further impetus for action. In March, 2000, Mayor Anthony Williams and 20 different agencies controlling land or having jurisdiction over the Anacostia shoreline signed the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU led to the production and completion of the Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan in November 2003. The Framework Plan is intended to guide the revitalization of the waterfront and its shoreline communities for decades to come. 1501.7

Land Use 1502

Land use statistics for the Anacostia Waterfront Planning Area appear in Figure 15.1. The area includes 3,960 acres of land and 1,625 acres of water. The Planning Area represents about 10 percent of the District of Columbia’s land area. 1502.1

Nearly 80 percent of the Planning Area is in public ownership. Almost 50 percent of the Planning Area consists of parks and open space, the highest percentage of any of the District’s ten planning areas. Much of this land is adjacent to the waterfront and is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. The open space varies from active recreation areas like soccer and baseball fields, to ecological sanctuaries like Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens and the National Arboretum. Street rights of way are the second largest land use, representing about 18 percent of the total area. Non-park federal uses represent 11 percent of the land area, including Fort McNair and the Navy Yard. 1502.2





Southwest Neighborhood

Residential uses account for just nine percent of the land area and are dispersed in the near Southeast, Southwest and Northeast areas. The largest concentration of housing is in Southwest DC. Commercial and industrial uses comprise about five percent of the Planning Area and are primarily located at Buzzard Point, in the near Southeast, at Waterside Mall, and along Benning Road in River Terrace. ^{1502.4}

Public facilities, including the DC Jail and local public schools, comprise three percent of the area. Rail, communication, and utilities—including power plants—also account for about three percent. Institutional uses comprise about one percent of the area. Approximately 127 acres – just over three percent of the Planning Area – consists of vacant, unimproved private land. ^{1502.5}

Demographics ¹⁵⁰³

Basic demographic data for the Anacostia Waterfront is shown in Table 15.1. In 2000, the area had a population of almost 26,000, or about 4.5 percent of the city's total. The number of residents in the area did not change significantly between 1990 and 2000. In 2005, the population is estimated to be 24,400, with the recent decline driven by the demolition of the 758-unit Arthur Capper-Carrollsborg public housing project and a slight decline in household size. Average household size in 2005 is estimated to be 1.93, which is lower than the city average of 2.12. Average household size has been dropping in the Anacostia Waterfront as it has in other neighborhoods across the city. It was 2.08 in 1990. The decline is likely to continue in the future as much of the planned residential development consists of higher density housing with smaller units. ^{1503.1}

Approximately 78 percent of the area's residents are African-American, which is higher than the citywide average of 60 percent. Only about three percent of the area's residents are of Hispanic origin, and almost six percent are foreign born. Relative to the city as a whole, the area has higher a percentage of children, with 22 percent of the residents under 18, compared to a citywide average of 20 percent. The area's percentage of seniors is similar to the city as a whole, with about 12 percent of its residents over the age of 65. ^{1503.2}



DISTRICT ELEMENTS

Table 15.1: Anacostia Waterfront at a Glance 1503.3

Basic Statistics

Land Area (square miles)		8.7
Population		
	1990	25,710
	2000	25,994
	2005 (estimated) (*)	24,400
	2025 (projected) (*)	44,300
Households (2005) (*)		11,100
Household Population (2005) (excludes group quarters) (*)		21,300
Persons Per Household (2005) (*)		1.93
Jobs (2005) (*)		38,300
Density (persons per sq mile) (2005) (*)		2,800

Year 2000 Census Data Profile

		Anacostia Waterfront Planning Area (**)		Citywide
		Total	% of Total	% of Total
Age				
	Under 18	5,816	22.4	20.0
	18-65	17,137	65.9	67.8
	Over 65	3,041	11.7	12.2
Residents Below Poverty Level		7,031	27.1	20.2
Racial Composition				
	White	4,084	15.7	30.4
	Black	20,358	78.3	60.3
	Native American	59	0.2	0.3
	Asian/ Pacific Islander	382	1.5	2.6
	Other	420	1.6	2.8
	Multi-Racial	690	2.7	5.2
Hispanic Origin		741	2.9	7.9
Foreign-Born Residents		1,535	5.9	12.9
Tenure				
	Owner Households	3,554	30.2	40.7
	Renter Households	8,203	69.8	59.3
Population 5+ yrs in same house in 2000 as in 1995		11,171	45.9	46.9
Housing Occupancy				
	Occupied Units	11,758	92.5	90.4
	Vacant Units	960	7.5	9.6
Housing by Unit Type				
	1-unit detached	533	4.2	13.1
	1-unit attached	3,222	25.3	26.4
	2-4 units	740	5.8	11.0
	5-9 units	1583	12.4	8.0
	10-19 units	575	4.5	10.3
	20-49 units	480	3.8	7.4
	50+ units	5,246	41.2	23.3
	Mobile/ other	338	2.7	0.2

(*) Figures noted with an asterisk are estimates developed by the Office of Planning and Department of Employment Services based on a variety of data sources. (**) Total population of subcategories may not match 2000 Census totals due to sampling errors.



According to the 2000 Census, about 33 percent of the jobs in the Planning Area were filled by Maryland residents and about 30 percent were filled by Virginia residents. Only about one-quarter were filled by District residents.

Housing Characteristics ¹⁵⁰⁴

A majority of the housing stock in the Anacostia Waterfront Planning Area is contained in multi-family buildings. The 2000 Census reported that about 41 percent of the housing stock was located in buildings with 50 or more units, which is almost twice the citywide proportion of 23 percent. An additional 12 percent of the housing stock consists of residences with 5-9 units, compared to about 8 percent in the city as a whole. About one-quarter of the area's housing stock consists of rowhouses and townhomes, which is similar to the citywide average. However, the proportion of single family detached homes in the Anacostia Waterfront Planning Area is only four percent, which is substantially less than the citywide average of 13 percent.

^{1504.1}

The Planning Area has more than 330 dwelling units in the "Other" category reported by the US Census, corresponding mainly to houseboats and live-aboards. These represent almost three percent of the Area's housing units. ^{1504.2}

In 2000, 7.5 percent of the units in the Anacostia Waterfront Planning Area were vacant. The percentage of vacant units is comparable to the city as a whole. Approximately 45 percent of the area's residents resided in the same house in 2000 as they did in 1995, which is also comparable to the citywide average. ^{1504.3}

Income and Employment ¹⁵⁰⁵

Data from the Department of Employment Services and the Office of Planning indicates there were approximately 38,000 jobs in the Anacostia Waterfront Area in 2005. This represents five percent of the city's job base. According to the 2000 Census, about 33 percent of the jobs in the Planning Area were filled by Maryland residents and about 30 percent were filled by Virginia residents. Only about one-quarter were filled by District residents.

^{1505.1}

Most employed residents in the Anacostia Waterfront commute to jobs elsewhere in the city and region, with about 38 percent commuting to Central Washington, 26 percent commuting elsewhere in the District of Columbia, 29 percent commuting to Maryland and Virginia, and only seven percent working within the Anacostia Waterfront Planning Area. As of the 2000 Census, median household income in the Planning Area was \$31,576, compared to a citywide median of \$45,927. Approximately 27 percent of the residents lived below the federal poverty line, compared to a citywide average of 20 percent. ^{1505.2}



DISTRICT ELEMENTS

The river has come to symbolize the widening social and economic divide in the city, separating “east” from “west” and presenting a challenge to the city’s goal of growing more inclusively. It should instead become a unifier and a source of economic opportunity for the neighborhoods on its shores.

Projections ¹⁵⁰⁶

Based on land availability, planning policies, and regional growth trends, the Anacostia Waterfront area is projected to roughly double its population between 2005 and 2025. The Planning Area is expected to grow from 11,100 households in 2005 to 21,300 households in 2025, with a projected increase in population from 24,400 to 44,300. Much of the growth is expected to consist of moderate to high density residential development along the west side of the lower waterfront and on the east side of the waterfront in the Kenilworth-Parkside and Poplar Point neighborhoods. The Waterfront Planning Area represents 18 percent of the household growth expected in the District of Columbia over the next 20 years. ^{1506.1}

The number of jobs is expected to increase from about 38,300 in 2005 to 67,700 in 2025. Much of the increase is anticipated to occur in the vicinity of M Street SE and along South Capitol Street. Job growth in this Planning Area represents nearly one-quarter of the citywide 20-year total. ^{1506.2}

Major Planning and Development Issues ¹⁵⁰⁷

Planning issues along the Anacostia Waterfront were discussed at many of the Comprehensive Plan workshops held in 2005 and 2006, particularly at meetings conducted on Capitol Hill and in Southwest DC. Priorities for this area were more explicitly stated during the three-year process that led to the development of the Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan. Concurrent planning programs for the Southwest Waterfront, Reservation 13, and the Near Southeast in the early 2000s involved hundreds of District residents. Since 2000, several citizens advisory groups, focus groups, and design charettes have been convened, providing additional opportunities to identify key issues and goals. ^{1507.1}

The Comprehensive Plan responds to the key messages provided by the community at these meetings. These are summarized below: ^{1507.2}

- (a) The river has come to symbolize the widening social and economic divide in the city, separating “east” from “west” and presenting a challenge to the city’s goal of growing more inclusively. It should instead become a unifier and a source of economic opportunity for the neighborhoods on its shores. The waterfront should unite the city physically, economically, and socially. This will require redefining its image and identity, and fundamentally redirecting growth patterns in the city toward emerging waterfront areas.





Canoeing on the Anacostia

- (b) Revitalizing the waterfront must not be done at the expense of the established communities that exist near its shoreline. Existing neighborhoods and important community institutions should be conserved, and should be the focus of reinvestment during the coming years. Residents must have a say in the future of the waterfront and should be protected from displacement as change occurs. Within new neighborhoods, diverse housing choices should be provided so that a mix of household types and incomes are accommodated. Affordable housing for working families and for the city's poorest residents must be part of this equation. Social and economic diversity must be respected.
- (c) The river provides a unique setting for monuments, memorials, and signature features that can potentially shape and redefine Washington's identity in the 21st Century. This potential should not be squandered. The Potomac River is already a celebrated waterfront, but its character is distinctive in its own way. The Anacostia should be unique, with activities that invigorate urban life. New destinations should celebrate the cultural heritage of the city and the nation. As cultural facilities are developed, the extraordinary and unheralded stories of the neighborhoods along the river should be told.
- (d) Many of the great open spaces and parks of the Anacostia Waterfront are hard to find, underutilized, and neglected. These areas should be better connected to one another, and to the neighborhoods they adjoin. A variety of park environments should be created, from lively urban waterfront plazas to serene natural settings. Trails and promenades are needed to provide better access along the shoreline, and to make the waterfront more accessible to surrounding communities. New parks, recreational areas, and cultural facilities should be developed.
- (e) Urban development and natural resource conservation should not be mutually exclusive but should go hand in hand. Development on the waterfront—and throughout the watershed—should be environmentally sustainable and designed to minimize negative effects on water quality and ecological resources. In some cases, Plans to reduce sewage overflows into the river should be accompanied by restoration of wetlands and buried streams, and conservation of natural habitat. From a regional perspective, additional density along the waterfront is one of the best examples of "smart growth." It can curb urban sprawl by channeling more housing demand back toward the center city. More density near the waterfront can also be used to leverage the creation of additional waterfront parks and open spaces.



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Development along the waterfront must be designed to respect the scale and integrity of adjacent neighborhoods. As the city works to create distinct waterfront destinations, it should also restore and rehabilitate historic structures, protect views and sunlight, reinforce existing neighborhood commercial centers, and enhance the quality of life for existing residents.

- (f) Access between the east and west sides of the river should be improved. “Human” scale crossings should be emphasized, rather than the existing freeway bridges which are almost exclusively oriented toward cars and trucks. The design of transportation infrastructure should be rethought to better serve waterfront neighborhoods, reduce barriers to waterfront access, and create gateways to waterfront parks. Bridges should be regarded as opportunities for great civic architecture. In general, transportation design should strive for a better balance between the needs of cars, and the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. The river itself should be seen as a transit opportunity, with water taxis and ferries providing easy access across the river and to riverfront designations like Georgetown and Alexandria.
- (g) Development along the waterfront must be designed to respect the scale and integrity of adjacent neighborhoods. As the city works to create distinct waterfront destinations, it should also restore and rehabilitate historic structures, protect views and sunlight, reinforce existing neighborhood commercial centers, and enhance the quality of life for existing residents. While densities in new waterfront communities are likely to be higher than those in adjacent communities, they should not be visually overwhelming. This is particularly true where new development sites abut fine-grained row house neighborhoods that have existed for more than a century. Planning for large-scale development must be responsive to local concerns about traffic, crowd-control, displacement, community service impacts, and changing neighborhood character.

POLICIES AND ACTIONS

AW-1.0 General Policies

AW-1.1 Guiding Growth and Neighborhood Conservation

1508

The following general policies and actions should guide growth and neighborhood conservation decisions in the Anacostia Waterfront area. These policies and actions should be considered in tandem with those in the citywide elements of the Comprehensive Plan. 1508.1

Policy AW-1.1.1: Conservation of Established Waterfront Neighborhoods

Revitalize and preserve established neighborhoods in the Waterfront Planning Area. Continued investment in the existing housing stock and in established local commercial areas should be strongly encouraged. 1508.2





Southwest Waterfront

Policy AW-1.1.2: New Waterfront Neighborhoods

Create new mixed use neighborhoods on vacant or underutilized waterfront lands, particularly on large contiguous publicly-owned waterfront sites. New neighborhoods should be developed at the Southwest Waterfront, Buzzard Point, the Southeast Federal Center and Carrolsburg areas, Reservation 13, Poplar Point, and Kenilworth-Parkside. A substantial amount of new housing should be developed in these areas, reaching households of all incomes, types, sizes, and needs. ^{1508.3}

Policy AW-1.1.3: Linkages Between the Waterfront and Nearby Neighborhoods

Establish stronger linkages between the waterfront and adjacent upland neighborhoods including Deanwood, Mayfair, Kenilworth-Parkside, River Terrace, Fairlawn, Twining, Kenilworth, Historic Anacostia, Carver-Langston, Kingman Park, Hill East, Capitol Hill, Barney Circle, and Southwest. Maximize public access to the waterfront from these areas through the development of a riverwalk and shoreline trail, improved public transportation, redesigned bridges and freeways, and the extension of neighborhood streets and avenues to the water's edge. ^{1508.4}

Policy AW1.1.4: Waterfront Area Commercial Development

Encourage commercial development in the Waterfront Area in a manner that is consistent with the Future Land Use Map. Such development should bring more retail services and choices to the Anacostia Waterfront as well as space for government and private sector activities, such as offices and hotels. Focus commercial development along key corridors, particularly along Maine Avenue and M Street Southeast, along South Capitol Street; and near the Waterfront/SEU, Navy Yard, Stadium Armory, and Minnesota Avenue metro stations. ^{1508.5}

Policy AW1.1.5: Waterfront Development Amenities

Leverage new development in the Waterfront Planning area to create amenities and benefits that serve existing and new residents. These amenities should include parks, job training and educational opportunities, new community services, and transportation and infrastructure improvements. ^{1508.6}

Policy AW1.1.6: River Basins as a Planning Guide

Recognize and be responsive to the distinct settings and environments created by varying conditions along the shoreline. Consistent with the Anacostia Framework Plan, the river should be viewed as a series of "basins," each defined by their unique physical and visual characteristics. In general, there should be a progression from a more urban environment on the lower basins (Washington Channel and the river gateway) to a more natural environment on the upper basins (Kingman and Heritage Islands, Arboretum, etc.) ^{1508.7}



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Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue provides a potential gateway between Deanwood and the waterfront

Policy AW1.1.7: Pedestrian Orientation of Waterfront Uses

Provide a high level of pedestrian amenities along the shoreline, including informational and interpretive signs, benches and street furniture, and public art. 1508.8

Policy AW1.1.8: Multi-modal Waterfront Streets

Design streets along the waterfront to be truly multi-modal, meeting the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users as well as motor vehicles. Safe pedestrian crossings, including overpasses and underpasses, should be provided to improve waterfront access. 1508.9

Policy AW1.1.9: Barriers to Shoreline Access

Minimize the visual and accessibility impacts of railroad and highway infrastructure, surface parking, and industrial uses along the Anacostia River shoreline. In particular, the impacts of freeways on waterfront access should be mitigated by supporting the redesign of these facilities as tunnels or landscaped boulevards. 1508.10

Policy AW1.1.10: Strengthening the M Street and Maine Avenue Corridors

Strengthen the connection between the National Mall area and the Anacostia Waterfront by rebuilding Maine Avenue and M Street SE as graciously landscaped urban boulevards. These streets should be designed with generous pedestrian amenities, public transit improvements, landscaping, and ground floor uses that create a vibrant street environment. 1508.11

Policy AW1.1.11: Upgrading the Bridges

Upgrade the bridges across the Anacostia River to better manage transportation flows, facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel across the river, and provide attractive and distinctive civic landmarks. Construct additional pedestrian crossings on the upper reaches of the River, consistent with the Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan. 1508.12

▪ Action AW-1.1-A: Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan

Implement the recommendations of the Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan through interagency coordination, ongoing activities of the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation, and continued cooperative efforts with the federal government. 1508.13





Water and Sewer Authority Building
adjacent to the Southeast Federal
Center

▪ **Action AW-1.1-B: River Crossing Improvements**

Implement the recommendations of the Middle Anacostia River Transportation Crossings Study that seek to improve local and regional traffic mobility. ^{1508.14}

See the Citywide Elements for additional policies and actions related to the waterfront, including Land Use Element Section LU-1.2 on large sites, Transportation Sections T-2.5 on improvements to the Anacostia River bridges and T-2.1 on water taxis and streetcars, Environmental Protection Element Section E-3 on sustainability, and Urban Design Element Section UD-1.3 on Washington's identity as a waterfront city

AW-1.2 **Conserving and Enhancing Community Resources**
¹⁵⁰⁹

Policy AW-1.2.1: Historic and Cultural Waterfront Assets

Capitalize on the historic and cultural assets located near the waterfront, such as the Washington Navy Yard, the Langston Golf Course, Congressional Cemetery, and the National Arboretum. Public education about these assets should be expanded, the physical connections between them should be enhanced, and greater recognition of their value and importance should be achieved. ^{1509.1}

Policy AW-1.2.2: Waterfront Cultural and Commemorative Sites

Encourage the siting of new museums, memorials, civic gathering places, and cultural attractions on or near the Anacostia River as a way to catalyze revitalization and meet the demand for additional commemorative works without further crowding the National Mall and monumental core of the city. Such facilities should make the most of their waterfront locations and create an integrated system of gracious, beautiful, and vibrant places. ^{1509.2}

Policy AW-1.2.3: Waterfront Sports and Recreation Destinations

Develop new destinations for sports, recreation, and celebration on or near the Anacostia waterfront. Ensure that these destinations are served by adequate and efficient transportation systems and infrastructure. ^{1509.3}

Policy AW-1.2.4: Waterfront Habitat Restoration

Undertake a range of environmental initiatives along the Anacostia River to eliminate combined sewer overflows, reduce urban runoff, restore wetlands and tributary streams, increase oxygen levels in the water, remediate toxins in the riverbed, clean and redevelop contaminated brownfield sites, and enhance natural habitat. ^{1509.4}



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Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens

Policy AW-1.2.5: Intergovernmental Coordination on the Waterfront

Promote multi-jurisdictional and intergovernmental initiatives to improve water quality, recognizing that most of the watershed is outside the District of Columbia and falls under the jurisdiction of multiple agencies. ^{1509.5}

Policy AW-1.2.6: Water-Oriented Recreation

Improve water quality in a manner that supports additional water-oriented recreational activities on the Anacostia River, including fishing, boating and ultimately, swimming. ^{1509.6}

Policy AW-1.2.7: Anacostia RiverParks

Create a connected network of waterfront parks that are easily accessible to surrounding neighborhoods and accommodate the need for more local and regional serving recreational activities in the city. New parks should be an integral part of any new waterfront neighborhood, and should showcase the remarkably diverse landscape along the Anacostia River. A variety of active and passive recreational settings should be provided. ^{1509.7}

Policy AW-1.2.8: Kingman and Heritage Islands

Retain Kingman and Heritage Islands as natural sanctuaries. Uses should be limited to an interpretive nature center, trails, public art, passive open space, and pedestrian accessways. ^{1509.8}

Policy AW-1.2.9: African-American Heritage

Recognize and highlight the role of waterfront neighborhoods in the history of the District's African-American community. This role should be commemorated and recognized through markers, heritage trails, and cultural facilities. ^{1509.9}

Policy AW-1.2.9: East of the River Gateways

Improve the visual and urban design qualities of the gateways into East-of-the-River neighborhoods from the Anacostia River crossings, with landscape and transportation improvements along Howard Road, Martin Luther King Jr Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, Randle Circle (Minnesota and Massachusetts), Benning Road, and Kenilworth Avenue. ^{1509.10}

See the Citywide Elements for additional policies and actions on the waterfront, including Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Section PROS-3.2 on waterfront parks (including the Anacostia RiverParks Network) and PROS-3.3 on trails (including the Anacostia Riverwalk), Environmental Protection Element Section E-1.2 on wetlands and E-4.2 on water pollution and water quality improvements, and Infrastructure Element Sections IN-2.2 and IN-2.3 on stormwater runoff and the combined sewer overflow project.



Although it is relatively accessible and familiar to residents of Southwest, the Southwest Waterfront is not the active, public, civic space it could be. Roads and parking lots account for over 40 percent of the area, and there are 12 lanes of traffic between the shoreline and adjacent residential areas.

AW-2.0 Policy Focus Areas ¹⁵¹⁰

The Comprehensive Plan has identified six areas in the Anacostia Waterfront Planning Area as “policy focus areas,” meaning that they require a level of direction and guidance above that in the prior section of this Area Element and in the citywide elements (see Map 15.1 and Table 15.2).

These six areas are:

- Southwest Waterfront, home to the Washington Fish Market and popular waterfront restaurants
- South Capitol Street/ Buzzard Point, site of the new Washington Nationals Ballpark and a still active waterfront industrial district
- Near Southeast, an emerging office and residential development area
- Poplar Point, a large and prominent site on the river’s eastern edge
- Reservation 13/RFK Stadium, site of the DC Jail, the former DC General Hospital, the DC Armory, and RFK Stadium
- Kenilworth-Parkside, a partially-completed neighborhood with large vacant properties west of the Minnesota Avenue Metro station. ^{1510.1}

AW-2.1 Southwest Waterfront ¹⁵¹¹

The Southwest Waterfront is a 45-acre area along the Washington Channel, stretching three quarters of a mile along Maine Avenue from the Tidal Basin to Fort McNair. The area includes the Washington Fish Market, portions of East Potomac Park, a boating/residential community at Gangplank Marina, restaurants and entertainment uses, and parking areas. Nearby uses include the Arena Stage, several churches, Waterside Mall, office buildings, and apartments. Major points of access include 6th, 7th, and 9th Streets SW, and M Street SW. ^{1511.1}

Although it is relatively accessible and familiar to residents of Southwest, the Southwest Waterfront is not the active, public, civic space it could be. Roads and parking lots account for over 40 percent of the area, and there are 12 lanes of traffic (including both Water Street and Maine Avenue) between the shoreline and adjacent residential areas. L’Enfant Plaza and the National Mall are just a few blocks away. However, there is no clear means of pedestrian access from these heavily visited areas to the shoreline. With much of the Southwest Waterfront in public ownership, the city has a unique opportunity to create a place that serves both as an extension of the adjacent neighborhood and a new regional destination. ^{1511.2}

The District completed the Southwest Waterfront Development Plan in 2003, adopting short-term and mid-term actions to transform the area. The Plan calls for eliminating Water Street and improving Maine Avenue as a pedestrian-friendly urban street. The elimination of Water Street and replacement of surface parking with structured parking will increase available public space and developable land. This will allow for the creation of new parks, plazas and mixed-use development. Active ground floor uses such as retail stores and restaurants will make this area an active and animated urban waterfront. ^{1511.3}



DISTRICT ELEMENTS

Table 15.2:
Policy Focus Areas Within and
Adjacent to Anacostia
Waterfront ^{1510.2}

Within Anacostia Waterfront	
2.1	Southwest Waterfront (see p. 15-15)
2.2	South Capitol Street/ Buzzard Point (see p. 15-18)
2.3	Near Southeast (see p. 15-21)
2.4	Poplar Point (see p. 15-24)
2.5	Reservation 13/ RFK Stadium (see p. 15-27)
2.6	Kenilworth/ Parkside (see p. 15-29)
Adjacent to Anacostia Waterfront	
1	New York Av. Corridor/ Brentwood (see p. 24-21)
2	Lower Bladensburg/ Hechinger Mall (see p. 24-19)
3	Deanwood (see p. 18-17)
4	Minnesota-Benning Business District (see p. 18-14)
5	Pennsylvania Avenue Corridor/ Capitol Hill (see p. 16-24)
6	Historic Anacostia (see p. 19-16)
7	Barry Farm/ Hillsdale/Stanton (see P. 19-20)
8	St. Elizabeths Hospital (see P. 19-19)
9	Pennsylvania Ave SE Corridor (east of the River) (see p. 18-22)

Illustrative sketches in the Southwest Waterfront Plan envision some 800 new residences, a large hotel, and more than 500,000 square feet of retail, office, cultural, and civic uses. New public gathering places will include an urban “Market Square” near the Fish Wharf, and a more passive Civic Park at the south end of the waterfront near M Street SW. Between these spaces will be a series of smaller plazas on the Washington Channel that mark the ends of local streets. The existing fish market will be retained in its present location and refurbished, with its low scale character maintained. ^{1511.4}

The illustrative plans also suggest improving pedestrian access to the waterfront via the Banneker Overlook at the foot of 10th Street SW and the development of a museum or monument in this area. New water taxi service, relocation of tour boat parking, transit improvements, and landscaping also are called for. ^{1511.5}

Plans for the Southwest Waterfront should be implemented in a way that recognizes the broader context of the Southwest neighborhood. Southwest is a strong urban community which benefits from the wide social, economic, and ethnic diversity of its residents, as well as a diverse mix of housing types and affordability levels. The neighborhood includes Waterside Mall, initially envisioned as Southwest’s “Town Square” in the 1950s-era urban renewal plans. Today the Mall is an office and retail complex of over one million square feet of floor space, including a supermarket, drug store, and bank. Waterside Mall never evolved into the Town Square it was envisioned to become, and today is planned for redevelopment. Plans for the site call for the re-establishment of 4th Street through the site, and the retention and improvement of retail and office space—along with new uses such as housing and open space. ^{1511.6}

Policy AW-2.1.1: Mixed Use Development

Support the redevelopment of the Southwest Waterfront with medium to high-density housing, commercial and cultural uses, and improved open space and parking. The development should be designed to make the most of the waterfront location, preserving views and enhancing access to and along the shoreline. ^{1511.7}

Policy AW-2.1.2: New Public Spaces and Open Space

Create new public spaces and plazas at the Southwest waterfront, including an expanded public promenade at the water’s edge. Public piers should extend from each of the major terminating streets, providing views and public access to the water. ^{1511.8}

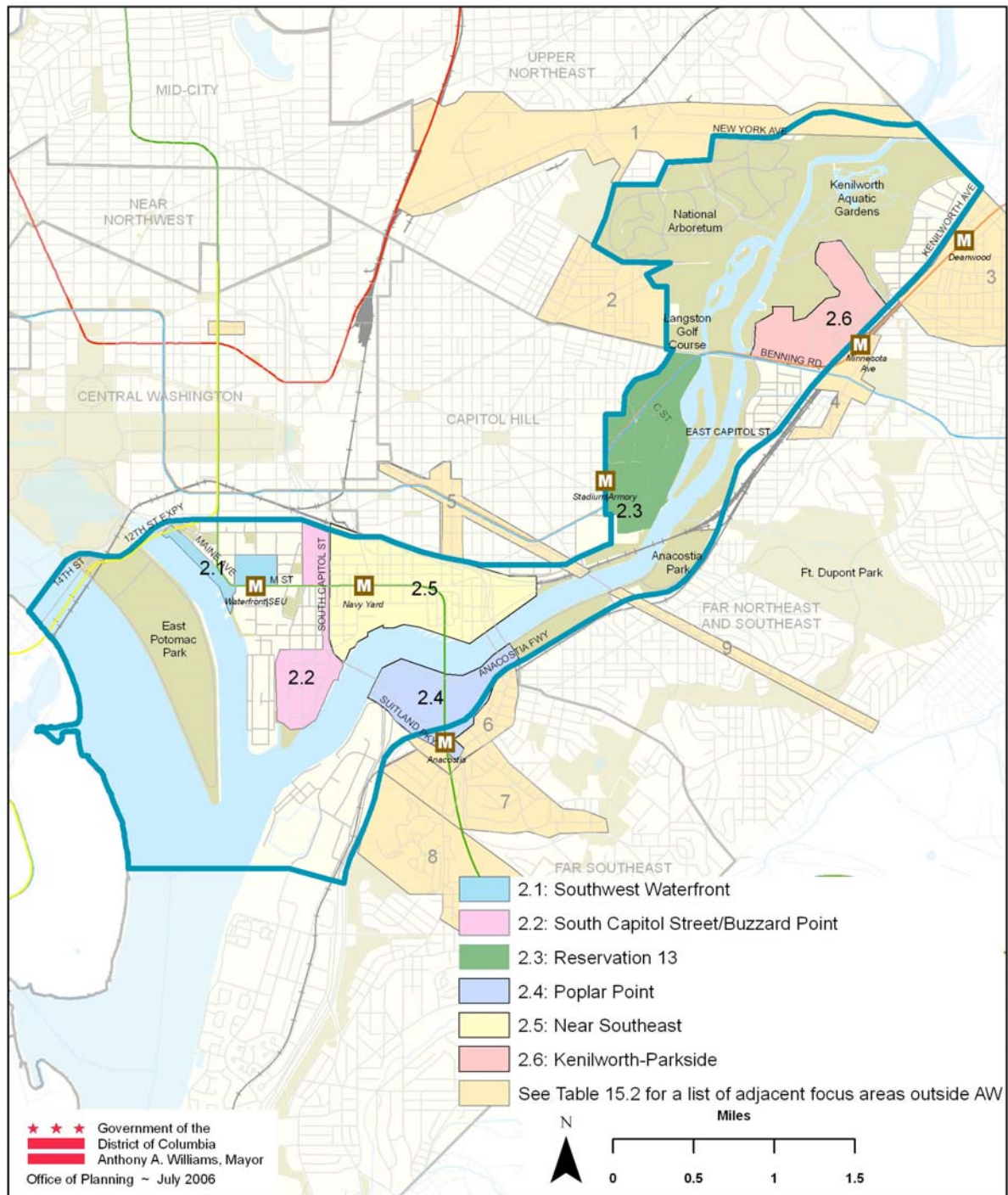
Policy AW-2.1.3: Connecting to the Southwest Waterfront

Enhance pedestrian connections from the Southwest neighborhood and L’Enfant Plaza area to the Washington Channel by creating new public spaces and trails, eliminating Water Street, reducing surface parking, linking the Banneker Overlook to Maine Avenue, and providing safer pedestrian crossings across Maine Avenue. ^{1511.9}



Anacostia Waterfront Area Element

Map 15.1: Anacostia Waterfront Policy Focus Areas 1510.3



DISTRICT ELEMENTS



Renderings of possible Southwest Waterfront development and Waterfront promenade (illustrative only)

Policy AW-2.1.4: Maine Avenue

Transform Maine Avenue into a landscaped urban street that has direct access to waterfront uses, provides a pedestrian-friendly street environment, and accommodates multiple modes of travel (including bicycles). 1511.10

Policy AW-2.1.5: Washington Channel Maritime Activities

Reorganize the Washington Channel's maritime activities, including cruise ship berths and marinas, to provide more appropriate relationships to landside uses and provide opportunities for water taxis, ferries, and other forms of water transportation. 1511.11

Policy AW-2.1.6: Waterside Mall

Support the redevelopment of Waterside Mall with residential, office, and local-serving retail uses. The site should be strengthened as a retail anchor for the surrounding Southwest community. Its redesign should restore 4th Street SW as part of the city street grid, and improve aesthetics, circulation, and connectivity to surrounding uses. 1511.12

■ Action AW-2.1-A: Southwest Waterfront Development Plan

Implement the 2003 Southwest Waterfront Development Plan. 1511.13

■ Action AW-2.1-B: Long-Term Improvements

Study the feasibility of the long-term improvements identified in the Southwest Waterfront Plan, such as a Hains Point Canal (in East Potomac Park), a new Yellow Line Metro station at the waterfront, and construction of a pedestrian bridge across the Channel near the Case Bridge. 1511.14

AW-2.2: South Capitol Street/ Buzzard Point 1512

South Capitol Street is one of the District's four principal axes and marks the division between the southeast and southwest quadrants of the city. It is an important part of the regional highway system, with traffic volumes of approximately 100,000 cars per day. The street provides many residents and visitors with their first view of the U.S. Capitol building and is an important gateway into Central Washington. 1512.1

This symbolic role contrasts with the current state of the corridor. Awkwardly shaped properties, some vacant and other barricaded from public access, front the street between the U.S. Capitol and I-395. Elevated railroad tracks and freeway ramps obstruct vistas and the massive Capitol Power Plant is a looming presence. South of I-395, the street enters into a jumble of fast food restaurants, gas stations, poorly maintained commercial uses, vacant businesses, and parking lots. South of the Frederick Douglass Bridge, these uses give way to an eclectic mix of industrial and utility uses along the shoreline, including a power plant. 1512.2



Over the coming decades, South Capitol Street will be transformed into a waterfront gateway with new mixed use development, green space, broad sidewalks, and a beautiful new and realigned Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge.

The transportation infrastructure in the area also creates a significant barrier. Both South Capitol Street and the Frederick Douglass Bridge are in need of repair. There are no bike lanes along South Capitol Street and sidewalks are minimal and unshaded. High speed traffic and the lack of signalized intersections have been a deterrent to investment and create a harsh environment for pedestrians. ^{1512.3}

For the last ten years, the District has been working with its federal partners to transform South Capitol Street into a grand urban boulevard with a mix of land uses and commemorative works that are more fitting of its role as a gateway to the national capital. Such a vision was first laid out in the 1997 National Capital Planning Commission Legacy Plan, and later refined by the 2003 South Capitol Urban Design Study. A Task Force including federal and District representatives was convened in 2004 to develop design options and an open space framework for the corridor. Concurrently, the District selected a 20-acre site on the east side of South Capitol Street between Potomac Avenue and N Street SE as the site for a new 41,000-seat baseball stadium. ^{1512.4}

Over the coming decades, South Capitol Street will be transformed into a waterfront gateway with new mixed use development, green space, broad sidewalks, and a beautiful new and realigned Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge. High-density office, housing, and retail uses are envisioned along the corridor between I-395 and the shoreline. The stadium will become the centerpiece of a new entertainment district that will include cultural attractions, retail, restaurants, and high-density housing. Near the foot of the reconstructed Frederick Douglass bridge, an oval traffic rotary is planned to create a green “commons” for a future national memorial. A new waterfront park will be created at the shoreline, linked to the network of parks planned up and down the river. Further south in Buzzard Point, new mixed use residential and commercial development will be encouraged on former industrial land. ^{1512.5}

The South Capitol corridor will require additional planning and analysis in the coming years. Detailed area planning for the Baseball Stadium vicinity is already underway. Future plans will need to focus on the Buzzard Point waterfront, addressing such issues as land use compatibility, the relocation (or retention) of existing uses, transportation and access, and urban design. Plans for this area should improve connections between Southwest and the waterfront, and should retain and improve the established low-scale residential areas on the west side of South Capitol Street. ^{1512.6}

Policy AW-2.2.1: South Capitol Street Urban Boulevard

Transform South Capitol Street into a great urban boulevard and “walking” street, befitting its role as a gateway to the U.S. Capitol and a major Anacostia River crossing. Development along the street should include a mix of federal, District, and private uses. ^{1512.7}



DISTRICT ELEMENTS



South Capitol Street

Policy AW-2.2.2: Ballpark Entertainment District

Leverage the construction of the Washington Nationals Ballpark to catalyze development of the South Capitol Street corridor with retail, high density residential, entertainment, and commercial uses. ^{1512.8}

Policy AW-2.2.3: South Capitol Commemorative and Civic Uses

Incorporate ceremonial uses such as memorials, plazas, monuments, museums and other commemorative works, along the South Capitol Street Corridor. The revitalized street provides a significant opportunity to expand civic and cultural facilities beyond the confines of the monumental core. ^{1512.9}

Policy AW-2.2.4: South Capitol Street Transit Improvements

Promote transit improvements along the South Capitol Corridor, including streetcar or bus rapid transit, and improved pedestrian connections to the Metrorail stations at Navy Yard and Waterside Mall /SEU. ^{1512.10}

Policy AW-2.2.5: South Capitol Open Space

Create additional open space in the South Capitol Street corridor, including an oval traffic rotary and South Capitol “commons,” and a new waterfront park along the Anacostia shoreline. ^{1512.11}

Policy AW-2.2.6: South Capitol Neighborhood Buffers

Ensure that the established communities adjacent to the South Capitol Street corridor, including the James Creek and Greenleaf Gardens housing projects and adjacent residential areas, are buffered from adverse impacts associated with increased density and traffic relating to stadium area development. Conserve these communities as important parts of the city fabric, and as affordable housing resources for the Southwest community. ^{1512.12}

Policy AW-2.2.7: Buzzard Point

Support the long-term redevelopment of Buzzard Point with mixed medium- to high-density commercial and residential uses. Recognize the opportunity for innovative design and architecture in this area, and for the creation of a unique urban waterfront. ^{1512.13}

■ Action AW-2.2-A: Coordination with Federal Agencies

Continue to coordinate with the National Capital Planning Commission, the National Park Service, and other federal agencies on implementing and refining the South Capitol Street Urban Design Study. ^{1512.14}

■ Action AW-2.2-B: Ballpark Area Plan

Work collaboratively with the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation in completing detailed area plans for the Ballpark entertainment district. ^{1512.15}





Over the last ten years, District and federal initiatives have begun to transform the Near Southeast into a dynamic waterfront neighborhood and workplace.

▪ *Action AW-2.2.-C: Buzzard Point Plan*

Work collaboratively with the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation in developing a detailed area plan for Buzzard Point. The Plan should address the future of industrial and utility uses in Buzzard Point, identify concepts and standards for new development, and address a range of related urban design, transportation, infrastructure, environmental, and community service issues. The feasibility of access along the Fort McNair waterfront also should be addressed. ^{1512.16}

▪ *Action AW-2.2.D: South Capitol Gateway*

Create a civic or commemorative feature of national significance at the north end of the Frederick Douglass Bridge to celebrate this location as a riverfront and city gateway. ^{1512.17}

▪ *Action AW-2.2.E: South Capitol Transportation Improvements*

Continue efforts to improve traffic flows and accommodate additional travel modes along South Capitol Street, including completion of the South Capitol Environmental Impact Statement and the reconstruction of the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge and related access points. ^{1512.18}

AW-2.3 Near Southeast ¹⁵¹³

The Near Southeast includes the triangular area between the Southeast/Southwest Freeway, South Capitol Street, and the Anacostia River. This 350-acre area has played an important role in the history of Washington, D.C.—its initial settlement even predates the creation of the District of Columbia. In the 19th century, this was a community where residential streets came down to the river's edge, a place teeming with life and maritime activity. Near Southeast suffered substantial disinvestment during the second half of the 20th century, however, along with social and economic decline. The 2000 Census reported that the area had one of the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the city. Much of the land near the shoreline still sits vacant today and is fenced off from public access.

^{1513.1}

Over the last ten years, District and federal initiatives have begun to transform the Near Southeast into a dynamic waterfront neighborhood and workplace. These initiatives have included the relocation of 5,000 federal employees back to the Washington Navy Yard, the redevelopment of the Arthur Capper Carrollsburg public housing project through the federal HOPE VI program, construction of a new headquarters for the US Department of Transportation, and the reconfiguration of the 55-acre Southeast Federal Center to allow new housing, offices, and waterfront parkland. Significant private and public investment has followed, including the construction of new office buildings, hotels, housing, and most recently, groundbreaking for the new Washington Nationals ballpark (see discussion under Section AW-2.2). ^{1513.2}



DISTRICT ELEMENTS

The Near Southeast Urban Design Plan envisions a net increase of 4,200 housing units, 13.6 million square feet of office space, and 705,000 square feet of retail area within the area's boundaries. The Plan also identifies more than 40 acres of new parks and open space.

Revitalization of the Near Southeast has been one of the cornerstones of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative. A 2003 AWI Urban Design Plan for the area provides a framework for its redevelopment. The Plan seeks to harness the development momentum in the Near Southeast and provide the direction necessary to help the neighborhood reach its full potential. It also addresses the infrastructure, transportation, open space, and streetscape improvements necessary to support redevelopment. The Near Southeast Plan establishes strategies to reconnect the area to the river, create mixed income housing opportunities, provide pedestrian-friendly streets, and establish great public spaces both on the waterfront and in the adjacent neighborhood. One of its most important principles is to preserve existing low income housing in the area, while adding thousands of units of new market rate and workforce housing. 1513.3

The Near Southeast Plan envisions M Street SE as a great urban boulevard with high-density offices and apartments activated by ground floor retail space, restaurants, and civic uses. It calls for the extension of New Jersey Avenue and other streets in the city grid to the waterfront, terminating at a new shoreline park and waterfront promenade. The Plan calls for the preservation of important historic resources such as the "Blue Castle" trolley barn and Latrobe Gate at the Navy Yard, as well as the historic street grid and network of park reservations laid out by Pierre L'Enfant. Strategies to link the area with adjacent neighborhoods like Southwest and Capitol Hill also are provided. 1513.4

Several subareas are identified by the Near Southeast Plan, with land use and urban design goals are set forth for each. These areas are South Capitol Gateway, Canal Blocks, Capper Carrollsburg, the Marine Barracks area, the 8th Street SE historic area, East M Street, the Navy Yard, the Southeast Federal Center, and the WASA pump station area. Strategies to better connect and integrate these areas are provided. The Near Southeast Plan lays out a street and block plan for the entire area, as well a trail system and open space framework. Guidelines for specific sites such as Florida Rock (near the foot of South Capitol) and Maritime Plaza (the former Washington Gas site) are provided to ensure that planned development fits into the framework for the overall area. 1513.5

The Near Southeast Urban Design Plan envisions a net increase of 4,200 housing units, 13.6 million square feet of office space, and 705,000 square feet of retail area within the area's boundaries. The Plan also identifies more than 40 acres of new parks and open space. Collaborative planning between the District, the federal government, and the private sector has been ongoing since the Near Southeast Plan was completed and will continue during the years ahead. 1513.6





Near Southeast, WASA building in foreground and US Capitol in background

Policy AW-2.3.1: Restoring the Urban Pattern of the Near Southeast

Facilitate redevelopment of the Near Southeast by breaking down large contiguously owned government properties into individual development parcels in scale with the traditional urban street grid. Encourage high-density mixed use development and open space on newly configured parcels, with new buildings designed and oriented to make the most of their waterfront or near-waterfront settings. 1513.7

Policy AW-2.3.2: Near Southeast Shoreline Access

Improve shoreline access and movement to and through the Near Southeast by eliminating real and perceived barriers, improving public space and street corridors, reducing the amount of land occupied by surface parking and industrial uses, and encouraging new land uses that maximize public activity near the waterfront. 1513.8

Policy AW-2.3.3: Near Southeast Housing Opportunities

Significantly increase residential land uses in the Near Southeast, particularly in the Southeast Federal Center, Capper Carrollsborg, Canal Blocks, and South Capitol Gateway areas. The mix of housing should accommodate residents of all incomes and household types. 1513.9

Policy AW-2.3.4: M Street Southeast

Transform M Street into an attractive pedestrian-oriented thoroughfare, lined with retail shops and services, with upper story office, hotels, and residential uses. The street itself should be designed as a multi-modal boulevard, accommodating pedestrians, bicycles, and transit vehicles as well as cars. It should strengthen connections between the Near Southeast, Southwest, and Capitol Hill. 1513.10

Policy AW-2.3.5: Restoration of the L'Enfant Plan in Near Southeast

Restore key elements of the original L'Enfant street plan within Near Southeast, including the city street grid, the extension of New Jersey Avenue and 3rd and 4th Streets SE to the waterfront, and the possible replacement of the Southeast/Southwest Freeway with an at-grade boulevard (Virginia Avenue). 1513.11

Policy AW-2.3.6: Near Southeast Urban Amenities

Leverage new development in the Near Southeast to create amenities such as parks, trails, child care facilities, civic uses, and retail space that serve the area's residents and workforce. 1513.12

Policy AW-2.3.7: Near Southeast Historic Identity

Create an identity in the Near Southeast that celebrates the area's history and integrates important historic and cultural resources. These resources include the Navy Yard, local educational, religious, and cultural institutions, and historic landmarks, including industrial and utility buildings like the DC Pumping Station. 1513.13



DISTRICT ELEMENTS



Aerial view of the site of the proposed Canal Blocks Park

- **Action AW-2.3.A: Near Southeast Urban Design Plan Implementation**
Implement the recommendations of the Near Southeast Urban Design Framework Plan, including zoning, financing, phasing, and infrastructure improvements. ^{1513.14}
- **Action AW-2.3.B: Canal Blocks and Waterfront Park**
Create the Canal Blocks Park on the three blocks between M Street and I Street that once contained the historic Washington Canal. Create a waterfront park of at least five acres along the shoreline at the Southeast Federal Center. These two parks should be designed as attractions and amenities for Near Southeast residents, employees, and visitors. They should be linked to each other and to Garfield Park and the Virginia Avenue playground by trails and greenways, and connected to other waterfront open spaces by the proposed Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail system. ^{1513.15}
- **Action AW-2.3.C: Zoning Incentives**
Continue to develop and apply zoning incentives to promote residential uses within the near Southeast, such as the Capitol Gateway Overlay District. Zoning changes should not diminish established provisions for transfer of development rights into the Capitol South area. ^{1513.16}

AW-2.4 Poplar Point ¹⁵¹⁴

Poplar Point encompasses the area on the east side of the Anacostia River bounded by South Capitol Street, I-295, and the 11th Street Bridge. The area contains U.S. Park Police and National Park Service facilities, the former Architect of the Capitol nurseries, a 700-space Metrorail parking garage, private land along Howard Road, a WASA pump station, and more than 60 acres of managed meadows. The point was created through the filling of tidal mudflats in the 1910s, and has been used for tree nurseries and federal and District maintenance activities for almost a century. Construction of freeways in the 1950s and 1960s left Poplar Point disconnected from the neighborhoods around it. ^{1514.1}

Poplar Point remains isolated today and is underutilized as a great waterfront open space. It is completely unknown to visitors and even most residents of the District of Columbia. Nearly half the site is fenced off from public access and much of the remainder is covered by freeway ramps and bridge approaches. Over the last ten years, a variety of alternatives for the site's future have been explored. Among others, these have included a regional big box shopping center, a Frederick Douglass National Memorial Park, an expanded WMATA parking lot, and a National African American Museum and Cultural Complex. ^{1514.2}



Poplar Point is envisioned as the future crown jewel in a necklace of great parks extending from Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens on the north to the mouth of the Anacostia River on the south. Key features of this park will include restored wetlands, a daylighted Stickfoot Creek, and new cultural and entertainment facilities.

In 2003, the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative called for the site's improvement as a green gateway to the Anacostia River Park network. Today, Poplar Point is envisioned as the future crown jewel in a necklace of great parks extending from Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens on the north to the mouth of the Anacostia River on the south. Key features of this park will include restored wetlands, a daylighted Stickfoot Creek, and new cultural and entertainment facilities. Poplar Point has also been identified by the National Capital Planning Commission as a potential site for new monuments, commemorative works and museums. It has also been discussed as a possible site for a 27,000-seat soccer stadium. ^{1514.3}

The Poplar Point Target Area Plan recommends rebuilding Anacostia Drive along a crescent-shaped alignment that divides the 120-acre area into roughly two halves. The park will be developed to the north of the crescent and a new mixed use neighborhood will be developed to the south. Medium to high-density housing should be provided within this neighborhood, with new development used to leverage the recreational and environmental improvements that will make this a great future public place for all Washingtonians. ^{1514.4}

The new Poplar Point park and neighborhood will be well connected to the nearby Anacostia Metrorail station and to new modes of transit including water taxis, shuttles, and circulators. Connections to the historic neighborhoods east of I-295 will be strengthened by upgrading Howard Road, W Street SE, and Good Hope Road and improving pedestrian and bicycle access along these gateways. Redevelopment of Poplar Point is intended to coincide with and bolster parallel initiatives to revitalize Historic Anacostia, redevelop St. Elizabeths Hospital, and rebuild Barry Farms. ^{1514.5}

Notable skyline features such as the Washington Monument and U.S. Capitol are visible from much of Poplar Point. The site also affords views of the tree-lined ridge above Historic Anacostia. Future structures on the site should preserve these important views, and make the most of the Point's spectacular physical setting. Development should maintain a scale that is compatible with and contributes to the fabric of adjacent neighborhoods, breaking development into identifiable, distinctive parts rather than creating "superblocks." ^{1514.6}

Policy AW-2.4.1: Poplar Point Park

Create a great urban park at Poplar Point that serves neighborhoods across the city, and that includes a variety of active and passive recreation areas. The park should be designed to serve a variety of users, including children, youth, families, and seniors. ^{1514.7}

Policy AW-2.4.2: Environmental Restoration at Poplar Point

Restore the natural environment at Poplar Point, especially the wetlands and Stickfoot Creek. The creek should be daylighted and restored as a natural habitat area. ^{1514.8}



DISTRICT ELEMENTS



Poplar Point

Policy AW-2.4.3: Poplar Point Mixed Use Neighborhood

Create a new transit-oriented mixed use neighborhood oriented around the Poplar Point Park, and linked to the Anacostia Metrorail station and new Anacostia streetcar line. The neighborhood should include a significant component of affordable housing, and should also include retail and civic uses that benefit the adjacent communities east of I-295. To minimize the loss of useable open space, development should utilize the land recovered after the realignment and reconstruction of the Frederick Douglass Bridge.

1514.9

Policy AW-2.4.4: Poplar Point Cultural Facilities

Support the development of regional cultural facilities at Poplar Point, such as museums, memorial sites, gardens, nature centers, amphitheaters, and public gathering places. 1514.10

Policy AW-2.4.5: Scale of Development at Poplar Point

Provide a scale and pattern of development in Poplar Point that is compatible with the fine-grained pattern found in nearby Historic Anacostia. Development should be pedestrian-oriented and should include active ground floor uses. The massing, height, and bulk of buildings and related features such as parking also should respect adjacent park uses and environmentally sensitive areas. 1514.11

Policy AW-2.4.6: Poplar Point Vista and View Preservation

Ensure that the design of Poplar Point capitalizes on significant views to the river and U.S. Capitol. The New Jersey Avenue axis is particularly important, as it provides a clear line of sight to the Capitol dome from Poplar Point's prominent river bend. 1514.12

Policy AW-2.4.7: Poplar Point as an Economic Catalyst

Use development at Poplar Point to bring economic development opportunities to adjacent neighborhoods, particularly Barry Farms and Historic Anacostia. Activities at Poplar Point should foster the success of existing businesses in Historic Anacostia, provide job opportunities, and create cultural, educational, and institutional uses that benefit East of the River communities. 1514.13

Policy AW-2.4.8: Access Improvements to Poplar Point

Improve access to Poplar Point by redesigning the road system on the site's perimeter, rebuilding the Frederick Douglass (South Capitol) bridge, converting the Anacostia Metrorail station to a multi-modal terminal, adding provisions for pedestrians and bicycles along Howard Road, W Street SE, and Good Hope Road, and providing water taxi service on the Anacostia River. 1514.14



Reservation 13 presents itself today as a vast area of large, seemingly unrelated buildings associated only by their proximity and former use. Vast areas of the site are used for parking, and there are few areas where the natural beauty of the waterside setting can be appreciated.

▪ *Action AW-2.4.A: Poplar Point Planning*

Conduct additional detailed planning studies for Poplar Point, refining the preliminary development program set forth by the 2003 Target Area Plan. The desired mix of land uses and building intensities for the site should be further defined, and the specific transportation and infrastructure improvements necessary to support development and park construction should be identified. ^{1514.15}

▪ *Action AW-2.4.B: Poplar Point Long-Range Transportation Improvements*

As recommended by the 2003 Target Area Plan, assess the feasibility of long-term modifications to the regional highway system on the perimeter of Poplar Point. These include depressing I-295 to facilitate crossings from Historic Anacostia to the waterfront, improving the connection between Suitland Parkway and South Capitol Street, and building a tunnel between I-295 and I-395. ^{1514.16}

See the Far Southeast and Southwest Area Element for additional language on the Anacostia Metrorail Station area.

AW-2.5

¹⁵¹⁵

Reservation 13/ RFK Stadium (Hill East Waterfront)

Public Reservation 13 lies on the eastern edge of the Hill East neighborhood on the west bank of the Anacostia River. For more than 150 years, the 67-acre site has been an isolated campus, separated from the neighborhood it adjoins and an obstacle between residents and the waterfront. Reservation 13 has contained public health facilities since 1846, when it became the location of the Washington Asylum—the city’s hospital for indigent patients. In later years, it housed a smallpox hospital, quarantine station, and crematory. Some of the site’s early buildings, such as Anne Archbold Hall, remain today. However, most of the buildings on the site were constructed in the 1930s and 1940s. The site became DC General Hospital in 1953. The DC Jail was built in 1976, replacing the old jail on the site that dated back to the 1870s. ^{1515.1}

Reservation 13 presents itself today as a vast area of large, seemingly unrelated buildings associated only by their proximity and former use. Vast areas of the site are used for parking, and there are few areas where the natural beauty of the waterside setting can be appreciated. The site is not at all related to the low-scale row house neighborhood west of 19th Street, nor is it related to the nearby Metrorail station at Stadium-Armory. While the Departments of Health and Mental Health, the Medical Examiner, and the Court Supervisor and Offender Supervision Agency all utilize space on the site, many of the buildings are underutilized. DC General Hospital itself was closed in 2001. ^{1515.2}



DISTRICT ELEMENTS

A Master Plan for Reservation 13 was completed in 2002 and later adopted by the City Council. It seeks to retain important civic uses, connect residential areas to the shoreline, and redevelop the site as an extension of the adjacent Hill East neighborhood. Since completion of the Plan, transfer of the site from federal to local ownership along with “pre-zoning” to reflect the uses envisioned by the Master Plan have both been initiated. As of early 2006, neither of these actions has been completed. ^{1515.3}

The adopted Reservation 13 Master Plan retains the DC Jail and other institutional uses and identifies approximately 40 acres for redevelopment. New facilities for health care and recreation are envisioned, along with new housing, offices, retail, and institutional uses. Key urban design features include extension of the Capitol Hill street grid into the site, new parks, and new access to the waterfront, including a great meadow overlooking the shoreline. Other notable elements of the plan include the extension of Massachusetts Avenue to the Anacostia River and a village square at the Stadium-Armory Metrorail station. The preliminary development program identifies the potential for 800 new housing units and over 3 million square feet of non-residential space, roughly doubling the total square footage of buildings on the site. ^{1515.4}

Immediately north of Reservation 13 lies the RFK Stadium complex. RFK Stadium was built in 1961 at a particularly prominent location along the east-west axis that includes the U.S. Capitol, Washington Monument, and Lincoln Memorial. More than 100 acres of land around the stadium is used for surface parking and unimproved open space. The area is owned by the federal government and is currently under study by the National Capital Planning Commission. It was identified in the 1997 NCPC Legacy Plan as a possible location for major new memorials, recreation, and open space as well as possible private development. ^{1515.5}

Policy AW-2.5.1: Redevelopment of Public Reservation 13

Redevelop Reservation 13 as a mixed use neighborhood that combines housing, office space, health care, civic, education, and recreational uses. Established uses such as the DC Correctional Facility should be retained. Health care and institutional uses on the site should be reorganized to accommodate infill uses, improve the site’s vitality and efficiency, and create an environment more conducive to pedestrian travel. ^{1515.6}

Policy AW-2.5.2: Reservation 13 as an Extension of Hill East

Connect the established Hill East neighborhood to the Anacostia waterfront by extending Massachusetts Avenue and the Capitol Hill street grid through Reservation 13 to new shoreline parks and open spaces. Massachusetts Avenue should be designed as a grand boulevard in the tradition of the L’Enfant Plan, and should terminate in a dramatic overlook above the Anacostia River. ^{1515.7}





Stadium-Armory Metrorail Station

Policy AW-2.5.3: Reservation 13 Parkland

Create new waterfront parklands and green spaces at Reservation 13, including a grand waterfront park, recreational trails along the waterfront, smaller neighborhood parks and open spaces within the site, and tree-lined pedestrian streets. ^{1515.8}

Policy AW-2.5.4: Stadium-Armory Station

Capitalize on the Stadium-Armory Metrorail station in the design and development of Reservation 13. This should include development of a new neighborhood center near 19th and C Streets SE that serves the unmet needs of the nearby community, as well as the development of medium to high density housing on the site. ^{1515.9}

Policy AW-2.5.5: Reservation 13 Building Heights

Achieve a gradual progression in building heights on Reservation 13, with the lowest heights along 19th Street SE to buffer the adjacent low-scale row house neighborhoods. Taller buildings should be located near the interior and eastern edges of the site. Buildings should be designed to maximize waterfront views and vistas, and minimize impacts on nearby residences. ^{1515.10}

Policy AW-2.5.6. RFK Stadium Area

Encourage better use of the National Park Service lands around RFK Stadium, including park and trail improvements that connect Hill East to the Langston Golf Course and National Arboretum areas to the north. ^{1515.11}

▪ *Action AW-2.5-A: Hill East / Reservation 13 Master Plan*

Implement the Hill East/Reservation 13 Master Plan, including the Massachusetts Avenue extension and the creation of new waterfront parks. Upon transfer of the land from federal to District control, the site should be rezoned to achieve the Master Plan's objectives. ^{1515.12}

▪ *Action AW-2.5.B: RFK Stadium Planning*

Work collaboratively with the National Capital Planning Commission and adjacent Hill East and Kingman Park communities in planning the area between Benning Road and Reservation 13, including RFK Stadium. ^{1515.13}

AW-2.6 Kenilworth-Parkside ¹⁵¹⁶

The upper reaches of the Anacostia River's eastern shore include the communities of Kenilworth- Parkside, Mayfair Mansions, and Eastland Gardens. This area also includes Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens Park, the Kenilworth-Parkside Recreation Area, and wetlands and open space managed by the National Park Service. The Pepco Plant and the Benning Road Waste Transfer Station are located adjacent to this area on the north side of Benning Road. ^{1516.1}



DISTRICT ELEMENTS



*Kenilworth-Parkside aerial view.
Minnesota Avenue Metro station
visible in background. (2004)*

Kenilworth-Parkside was initially developed as low income housing in the 1940s. During the 1980s, the 464-unit public housing complex was touted by the federal government as a success story after property management responsibilities were transferred to the local tenant organization. Crime dropped dramatically, and the quality of life visibly improved. The area's reputation as a testing ground for innovative housing policy continued through the 1990s. The public housing was sold and renovated and a "neotraditional town" was conceived on a 26-acre vacant site between Kenilworth and the Pepco Plant. About 100 affordable townhomes were constructed but most of the land remains vacant today. ^{1516.2}

Over the next decade, buildout of the remaining area in Kenilworth-Parkside is expected. Plans call for some 1,500 units of new medium to high density housing, 250,000 to 500,000 square feet of office space, and 30,000 square feet of retail space. A reconstructed pedestrian bridge will connect this area to the Minnesota Avenue Metro station, making the area transit accessible for new residents and employees. ^{1516.3}

The pedestrian connection will help achieve an important goal of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative in Far Northeast DC—improved access to the shoreline for the neighborhoods east of I-295. In addition to the Kenilworth-Parkside bridge, the creation of Marvin Gaye Park along Watts Branch, development of the Minnesota Avenue government center, and improvement of Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue as a "great street" should all help unite the community on both sides of the freeway. ^{1516.4}

Policy AW-2.6.1: Kenilworth Marsh Open Space improvements

Support federal efforts to improve and restore the Kenilworth Marsh and improve parkland on the upper reaches of the Anacostia River. Coordinate these efforts with District plans to restore habitat and improve ecological conditions along Watts Branch. ^{1516.5}

Policy AW-2.6.2: Kenilworth Parkside Transit Oriented Development

Support mixed-use residential, retail, and office development on the remaining vacant properties in the Kenilworth-Parkside neighborhood. Take advantage of this area's proximity to the Minnesota Avenue Metrorail station and its relative isolation from the low-density single family neighborhoods to the east to accommodate medium to high density housing that is well connected to transit and the adjacent waterfront open space. ^{1516.6}

Policy AW-2.6.3: Density Transitions at Parkside

Provide appropriate height and scale transitions between new higher density development at Kenilworth-Parkside neighborhood and the established moderate density townhomes and apartments in the vicinity. Buildings with greater heights should generally be sited along Kenilworth Avenue and Foote Street, and should step down in intensity moving west toward the river. ^{1516.7}



Policy AW-2.6.4: Buffering around Parkside

Maintain sufficient buffering, screening, and separation between new development at Kenilworth- Parkside and the adjacent Pepco plant and waste transfer station. 1516.8

Policy AW-2.6.5: Parkside Access Improvements

Improve vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle access to the Kenilworth/Parkside area. This should include improved horizontal clearance at the railroad crossings, safer pedestrian access ways, better signage, and improvements to the Kenilworth Avenue interchanges. 1516.9

▪ *Action AW-2.6-A: Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan*

Implement the Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan recommendations for Kenilworth-Parkside, including new gateways at the intersection of Benning Road and Kenilworth Avenue and at Watts Branch. 1516.10

▪ *Action AW-2.6-B: Kenilworth Parkside Small Area Plan*

Include the Kenilworth Parkside neighborhood in the Small Area Plan to be developed for the Minnesota Benning and Deanwood Metro station areas. 1516.11

See the Far Northeast and Southeast Area Element for text on Kenilworth Avenue improvements, and the proposed Small Area Plan for Deanwood/Minnesota Avenue.



